

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application, with Claims 1 and 6-8 being independent.

Claims 1-4, and 6-10 have been amended. Applicants submit that support for the amendments can be found in the original disclosure, and therefore no new matter has been added.

Claims 1-3 and 7 were objected to based on grammatical errors. Those claims have been amended in view of the Examiner's comments. Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are requested.

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The independent claims have been amended to clarify that the claimed invention concerns first through fourth outer shapes that occur in three different lines of a document image. Applicant submits that the claimed invention, as amended, is clearly supported by the specification, and therefore Applicant requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, as failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 4 has been amended to recite that the second and fourth outer shapes are at an identical column position, and Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection in view of the amendment.

Claims 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Those claims have been amended to recite a program embodied in a computer-readable medium. Accordingly, Applicant submits that invention recited in those claims is directed to statutory subject matter, and Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 1-3 and 6-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 6,068,706 to Brassil et al. in view of U.S. Publication No. 2004/0146199 to Berkner et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for the reasons discussed below.

As recited in independent Claim 1, the present invention includes, *inter alia*, the features of extracting a first outer shape in a first line, a second outer shape in a second line, a third outer shape in the first line, and a fourth outer shape in a third line, and controlling at least one of the outer shapes so that a parameter concerned with a distance between the first and second outer shapes and a parameter concerned with a distance between the third and fourth outer shapes are different from each other in correspondence with digital watermark information to be embedded, wherein each of the parameters is concerned with the distance calculated using left edges or right edges of each outer shape.

Applicant submits that the cited art fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned features of the invention recited in Claim 1. Brassil et al. discloses line-shift encoding and word-shift encoding. However, that patent fails to disclose or suggest embedding a digital watermark in a document image based on distance calculated using right edges and/or left edges of outer shapes that exist in different lines. Berkner et al. similarly fails to disclose or suggest at least that feature.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the present invention recited in Claim 1 is patentable over the cited art. The other independent claims recite features similar to those of Claim 1 discussed above, and those other independent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as Claim 1.

The dependent claims are patentable at least for the same reasons as the independent claims, as well as for the additional features they recite.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. L. Klock", written over a horizontal line.

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